



**THE
COMPASSIONATE
FRIENDS**

Linked Together

**Newsletter of the Atlanta Chapter
Spring 2006**

"The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive."

Atlanta Area Web Site

www.tcfatlanta.org

TCF Atlanta Newsletter

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The Atlanta Chapter of The Compassionate Friends meets the second Tuesday of each month at the:

First Christian Church of Atlanta,
4532 LaVista Road, Tucker, GA
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

April 11 – April Meeting

May 9 – May Meeting

June 13 – June Meeting

The Atlanta Chapter also offers a Sibling Group at the same time as our regular monthly meeting.

The Compassionate Friends, Inc. is a mutual assistance, self-help organization offering friendship, understanding, and hope to bereaved families. Anyone who has experienced the death of a child of any age, from any cause is welcome. Our meetings give parents an opportunity to talk about their child and about their feelings as they go through the grieving process. There is no religious affiliation. There are no membership dues. The purpose of this support group is not to focus on the cause of death or the age of the child, as it is to focus on being a bereaved parent, along with the feelings and issues that evolve around the death experience of a child.

To Our New Members

Coming to the first meeting is the hardest, but you have nothing to lose and everything to gain! Try not to judge your first meeting as to whether or not The Compassionate Friends will work for you. At the next meeting you may find just the right person or just the right words said that will help you in your grief work.

To Our Members Who are Further Down the 'Grief Road'

We need your encouragement and your support. Each meeting we have new parents. THINK BACK – what would it have been like for you at your first meeting if there had not been any TCF "veterans" to welcome you, share your grief, encourage you and tell you, "your pain will not always be this bad, it really does get better!"

YOU NEED NOT WALK ALONE.
WE ARE THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS.

Add Your Child's Name to the Atlanta Chapter's Walk to Remember Banner

A TCF national conference is a healing environment that can only be truly understood by those who have experienced one. TCF's 29th National Conference, July 14-16 in Dearborn, Mich., is your opportunity to attend an event carefully planned with a wealth of activities aimed at bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents dealing with the death of a child.

This year's national conference will include 114 workshops covering many aspects of grief, sharing sessions, a butterfly release, a complete sibling program and interesting keynote speakers. In addition, there will be memory boards, hospitality rooms, the Butterfly Boutique, a reflection room and a complete bookstore. First-time attendees will have a Friday morning orientation to help them get the most out of their conference experience.

Keynote speakers include: Chet Szuber, who received national exposure when he agreed to accept the gift of life from his daughter; Marilyn Heavilin, bereaved parent and author of the popular *Roses in December*; Bill Ritter, bereaved parent, minister and author of *Take the Dimness of My Soul Away -- Healing After a Loved One's Suicide*; and Pat Loder, bereaved parent, bereaved sibling and executive director of The Compassionate Friends. Those who attend also will be treated on Friday to a special evening with Darcie Sims, popular grief speaker who brings her own unique flavor to her presentations. Sunday starts with a butterfly release and then the seventh annual two-mile Walk to Remember, a very special experience with more than 1,000 expected to participate.

Atlanta Chapter's Banner

If you can't attend the conference, there are two ways that you can still participate and add your child or sibling's name to the conference memories.

Dan and Betty Bryl have agreed to represent our chapter in the Sunday morning Walk to Remember (see flyer on next page). To add your child or sibling's name to the banner that they will be carrying, simply return the flyer to our chapter before June 15.

Money donated to our chapter in this manner will be used to offset general chapter expenses and to help defray the conference registration expenses of chapter members who need financial assistance in attending the conference.

If you would like to attend the conference, but need assistance in paying conference fees, contact Cindy Durham (cindy_durham@bellsouth.net or 770-938-6511) no later than May 1.

Another way to participate in the conference is by sponsoring a Michigan Mitten in your child, grandchild, sibling or loved one's memory at the conference. The conference committee plans to decorate the registration area, memory boards and hospitality room with hundreds of Michigan Mittens featuring TCF kids. For details about this and a template for the mitten, go to www.compassionatefriends.org and click on the "sponsor a mitten" box along the right-hand column.

For more information, including online registration, visit www.compassionatefriends.org or call toll-free 877-969-0010.

5th Annual Race/Walk on April 29 Honors Memory of Brad Koster

The 5th Annual Koster 5K Classic Race/Walk at The Walker School will be held Saturday, April 29. The Walker School in Marietta continues to honor the memory of Brad Koster, who died of a rare form of cancer in July 2001, by having this event to raise money for the "Koster Memorial Scholarship Fund."

This year's Race/Walk participation is expected to be by far the largest. Already articles have been published in the local newspaper and numerous local businesses have displayed advertisements promoting the race.

The event includes a 5K road race and a "Fun Run" for parents and toddlers to enjoy together. Combined with the proceeds contributed last year by the Booster Club, many students receive financial assistance from the Koster Memorial Scholarship Fund.

To see the web site created by Brad's friends which tells his story and TWS's web site for online registration for the race, go to:
<http://www.walkeralumni.org/NETCOMMUNITY/Page.aspx?&pid=187&srcid=178>



Atlanta Walks For Our Children and Siblings Gone Too Soon

The Compassionate Friends National Walk to Remember will be held at 8 a.m. Sunday morning, July 16, in Dearborn, Mich., the National Conference host city, prior to the closing ceremony.

First held in conjunction with the national conference in 2000, this Remembrance Walk has quickly become a highlight for conference goers with between 600 and 1,000 joining together hand-in-hand, arm-in-arm to cover the two-mile course arranged for the event.

This is our way to honor the memories of children and siblings who we will never forget.

Families that have had a child die, but are unable to attend the conference or walk, are invited to include their child's name on our "Atlanta Walks" banner carried by members of our local Atlanta TCF Chapter attending the Dearborn Conference.

If you would like to have your child, sibling or grandchild's name included, please complete the following form and return it to us as soon as possible. The deadline is June 15th.

Atlanta Walks – 2006 In Memory of our Children and Siblings

Yes, I would like to have my child/sibling/grandchild included on the Atlanta Walks banner.

Child's Name _____
(Please print clearly)

Yes, I would like to help with the Walk to Remember Expenses and support the work of The Compassionate Friends Atlanta Chapter by making a donation in the amount of:

\$ _____ (\$10.00, \$25.00, \$50.00.....)

Please mail your check payable to "The Compassionate Friends" to:

The Compassionate Friends,
c/o Jayne Newton
808 Brentway Court
Lilburn, GA 30047

Thank you for your support. (Deadline June 15th)



Sample Banner from 2004 Walk for the Hollywood Conference

*"Atlanta Walks...
In Memory of Our Children and Siblings"*

Remembering Billy's Smile...



By Carol Hawley
Atlanta Chapter, TCF



There were many reasons to celebrate the month of March. There was St. Patrick's Day on the 17th, followed by the first day of Spring on the 20th. The trees and flowers need no calendar to remind them to wake up and do their job of brightening up the landscape and filling the air with fragrance. The

migratory birds are returning and, together with the resident birds, they filled the garden with activity.

Our family also celebrated an important date – our son Billy's birthday. It's his 23rd birthday and his second in heaven. He is missed by his parents, brother, grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, friends here and abroad, and lastly by his beloved German Shepherd Lucky. There are many things we all missed about Billy and there's one in particular - his smile.

When Billy smiles, he smiles with his eyes. So to honor the memory of Billy's birthday here's a song borrowed from the famous folk ditty, "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling." It's never been confirmed but once, a long time ago, the Hawley clan hopped on a boat and came to the United States. Whether or not Billy has Irish ancestry in his blood we all can vouch that indeed when Billy smiles, he smiles with his eyes.

There's a tear in your eye and I'm wondering why,
For it never should be there at all
With such power in your smile sure a stone you'd beguile,
So there's never a teardrop should fall

When your sweet lilting laughter's like some fairy song
And your eyes twinkle bright as can be,
You should laugh all the while and all other time smile
And now smile a smile for me

When Irish eyes are smiling,
Sure it's like a morning spring,
In the lilt of Irish laughter
You can hear the angels sing.

When Irish hearts are happy
All the world seems bright and gay,
And when Irish eyes are smiling,
Sure they'll steal your heart away.

For the smile is a part of the love in your heart
And it makes even sunshine more bright,
Like the linnets sweet song crooning all the day long
Comes your laughter so tender and light.

For the springtime of life is the sweetest of all,
There is ne'er a real care of regret;
And while springtime is ours throughout all of youth's
hours
Let us smile each chance we get.

*We all will forever remember you with a smile in our heart,
Billy!*

Mom, Dad, Alan and Lucky!

April Birthdays

<i>Child's Name</i>	<i>Birthday</i>	<i>Angel Date</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Family</i>
Michael Btembke	4/1/1985	8/3/2003	son	of Ghakarhi Btembke
Matthew Taylor	4/1/1980	4/13/2005	son	of Jim and Elaine Taylor
Jennifer Gryzinski	4/7/1985	8/21/2003	daughter	of Lisa M. Katz
Dr. Thomas Brown IV	4/8/1961	7/27/1999	son	of Lillie Brown
Bo Tuggle	4/12/1975	10/22/1992	son	of Connie and Johnny Tuggle
Mark Eugene Bullard	4/14/1958	1/11/1987	son	of Gerry and John Bullard
Padraic Dirr	4/20/1969	7/15/1969	son	of Jim Dirr
David Ferguson	4/20/1985	10/30/2004	son	of Christina and David Ferguson
Jason Maham	4/28/1975	8/17/2004	son	of Trish Mahan

April Angel Dates

<i>Child's Name</i>	<i>Birthday</i>	<i>Angel Date</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Family</i>
Terry Tedford	1/27/1949	4/1/2005	brother	of Cheryl Tedford
Jessica Lyn Bryl	1/19/1977	4/3/2000	daughter	of Betty and Daniel Bryl
Matthew Taylor	4/1/1980	4/13/2005	son	of Jim and Elaine Taylor
Jameka Deshon Holmes	11/4/1980	4/14/2004	daughter	of Charlotte Hamm
Jennifer Smith	8/24/1981	4/14/1998	daughter	of Linda Smith
John Sistrunk	8/10/1981	4/16/2002	son	of Sarah Smith Sistrunk
Juanito Vasquez	11/28/1986	4/17/2005	son	of Luly Albornoz
Philip E. Walsh	10/15/1980	4/21/2001	son	of Ruth Simmons
Christopher Kuzela	7/7/1967	4/24/1988	son	of Ed and Pat Kuzela
Xavier Khamani Ray	9/7/1995	4/24/2004	son	of Stephanie Ray
Charlie Wellman	1/20/1988	4/27/2005	son	of Mary Wellman

Cutting Off Bite-Sized Pieces of Grief Allows Progress in a Dark Place

By Mary Wellman
Atlanta Chapter, TCF

There is a story in a book called *Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing* by Thomas R. Golden that tells of a village being terrorized by a huge snake that would eat people, especially children.

No matter how careful the villagers were, the snake would occasionally catch someone unawares and eat them. Finally a villager decided this was enough and he needed to do something once and for all. So he packed a few things and went out into the jungle, sat down and began to play his flute.

The snake heard him but the villager continued to play his flute. The snake swallowed him and, inside the snake's belly, the well-prepared villager made himself comfortable with the provisions that he had with him. It was a tight spot but every time he got hungry he would slice off a portion of the snake's belly – both feeding himself and making more room for himself. Eventually he reached the heart of the snake, which he also ate, and – in doing so – killed the snake. The villager then cut his way out of the snake and went home.

The author makes a parallel between this story and grief over the death of a loved one. It is too big to go out and kill the whole thing at once.

In the beginning, it feels like being “swallowed by a snake” in that we are completely overtaken by our grief and can find ourselves in a pretty dark miserable place. Slowly we bite off and digest bits of our grief. We make ourselves as comfortable as possible. Yet, it can be very hard to see any

progress as we are in a pretty dark uncomfortable place. Over time, it gets roomier and more comfortable. Eventually we do reach the heart of grief and are able to come out of the “belly” of it.

I love the author's analogy in cutting off bite-sized pieces of grief and how you are making progress even though it still looks dark and damp and miserable all around you. Eventually you are able to come out of the “belly of it.” But I read the story early on in my grief journey and perhaps took it too literally. I thought I was going to find the “heart” of all this grief at some point. I knew that once my son died, I was already “in the belly.” Now, I needed to cut and chew for awhile. Someday I was sure to find the “heart” and then I would get on with my life.

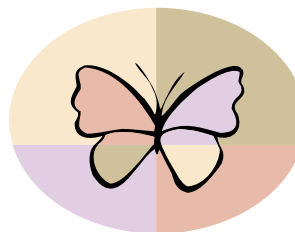
My biggest progress these days seems to be accepting that there is no fix, no “heart of it,” no getting on with my life as I formally knew it. I am beginning to accept that this pain will always be here – maybe not as raw and maybe not as intense – but always here. So I am beginning to look at how you move forward despite the pain.

A friend whose son died 2 ½ years ago wrote me: “We are surrounded by beauty, abundance, teeming creation and dazzling mystery – pain has led me to them more powerfully than any of the highs life dealt me prior...for me, 2 ½ years later, the burgeoning of spring is an inner reality. And the pain is no less vivid.” She has also written me: “For me these days, the big difference is that I don't visit the pain very much, and when I do, I can say hello and then leave before it snowballs on me. I don't know if that's right, but I haven't found a way to build up joy without spending longer periods out of that room.”

So now, I have given up trying to work my way to the "heart" of it. Instead, I am trying to spend "longer periods out of that room" where all the pain resides. This is a heartbreaking choice in some ways. Those who would distract you from the pain, protect you from it even, don't realize that at least early on in your grief, you feel closer to your child in your grief and pain. There are times when I relish the memories and the sadness they bring. I wrap the memories with their accompanying grief and sadness around me like a Grandma's handmade quilt and hold it all close because it is impossible to separate the memories from the sadness and grief.

hold out hope that someday will bring memories and closeness without so much pain and grief. But I am less sure.

Mother of Charlie (1/20/88 – 4/27/05)
Marywlmn@aol.com



Other times, I set it aside and do what needs doing. I feel less pain and grief then, but also less close to my child. I

May Birthdays

<i>Child's Name</i>	<i>Birthday</i>	<i>Angel Date</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Family</i>
Jennifer Lea Evans	5/6/1974	6/19/1995	daughter	of Delores Evans
David Brown	5/13/1970	10/7/2000	son	of Keith and Ann Brown
Daniel Prescott	5/19/1967	3/31/2004	son	of Marcia Prescott
Daniel Prescott	5/19/1967	3/31/2004	brother	of Pam Prescott
Chad Gordon	5/21/1972	9/3/1996	son	of Jayne and Wayne Newton
Kimberly Florence	5/23/1976	8/3/2003	daughter	of Kate Florence
Joey Capron	5/26/1963	3/17/1984	son	of Carmen Capron
David Thompson	5/27/1962	5/15/2001	son	of Bill Thompson
Damien White	5/17/1978	1/6/2003	son	of Robin White
Marc William Waidner	5/19/1970	10/30/1988	son	of Mary Alice Wood

May Angel Dates

<i>Child's Name</i>	<i>Birthday</i>	<i>Angel Date</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Family</i>
Mark Curtis Smith	10/13/1967	5/1/1989	son	of Jane Smith
Yolandra Erin Dixon	3/5/1976	5/3/1999	daughter	of Georgia Ware-Dixon
Connor Brown	10/6/1997	5/4/2003	grandson	of Kaye Hyde
Al Bath Wilson	11/2/1978	5/8/2002	son	of Susan Wilson
Chris Simpson	8/22/1978	5/9/1995	grandson	of Elizabeth Luke
Chris Simpson	8/22/1978	5/9/1995	son	of Tricia and Kenny Simpson
Brandon Burke	12/2/1985	5/10/2003	son	of Charlene and Johnny Burke
Brandon Burke	12/2/1985	5/10/2003	grandson	of Shirley A. Kendrick
Kameron Rutherford	11/21/2003	5/11/2004	son	of Judy and Khristopher Rutherford
Tyreek Seivwright	11/1/1982	5/12/2000	son	of Donna Attride
David Thompson	5/27/1962	5/15/2001	son	of Bill Thompson
Philip Brown	8/27/1981	5/18/2002	son and brother	of Horace Marie & Karen Brown
Kim Gelly	3/24/1966	5/24/2002	daughter	of Wanda and Bobby Boylston
Matthew Thomas Crowell	7/27/1982	5/24/1999	son	of Barry and Doris Crowell
Kim Gelly	3/24/1966	5/25/2002	sister	of Laurie Rogers
Kenneth David Kemp	11/2/1972	5/31/2001	son	of Kimberly Cain
Sallie Scanlon	10/20/1961	5/31/1993	daughter	of Jane R. Scanlon

June



<i>Child's Name</i>	<i>Birthday</i>	<i>Angel Date</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Family</i>
Tiffany Vaughn	6/7/1982	1/13/2000	daughter	of Sue Vaughn
Donald Wesley Carithers	6/10/1978	8/8/1998	son	of Susan and John Carithers
Matthew Abad	6/12/1982	10/2/2000	son	of Tess Abad
Evan Sheffield	6/12/1981	6/23/2004	son	of Cathy Spraez
Joshua Anavitarte	6/13/1979	3/3/2002	son	of Jean Marie Anavitarte
D'Keesiyah Hardaway	6/16/1996	3/3/2000	granddaughter	of Albert and Florence Daniels
Spencer McCrea Oedel	6/10/1986	9/11/2005	son	of Amy Lighthill
Jennifer Hower	6/23/1975	12/27/2004	sister	of Julie Fischer
John Allen Askins	6/24/1971	3/3/1995	son	of Elaine Askins
Brian Patrick Devine	6/26/1982	8/21/2005	brother	of Colleen Devine
Brian Patrick Devine	6/26/1982	8/21/2005	son	of Eileen and Patrick Devine
Mandi Lynn Mast	6/29/1980	8/15/2000	daughter	of Diane and Daniel Mast
Rebecca Steinbach	6/30/1987	6/19/2002	daughter	of Dawn Steinbach
Aaron Woodruff	6/30/1975	6/22/2002	brother	of Rachel Woodruff

June Angel Dates

<i>Child's Name</i>	<i>Birthday</i>	<i>Angel Date</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Family</i>
Joshua Polain	12/3/2002	6/1/2003	son	of Kimberly Polain
Paul Abraham	8/13/1975	6/5/2004	son	of Alan and Deborah Abraham
Kaxon Harris	10/3/2001	6/10/2003	son	of Karen Harris
Margie Ann Lind	8/21/1963	6/10/1979	daughter	of Bette and Bob Lind
Robert A. Lind, Jr.	11/29/1961	6/10/1979	son	of Bette and Bob Lind
Lane Veteto	10/7/1982	6/11/2001	son	of Margaret Bear
Keith Perry	11/14/1966	6/11/2004	son	of Oveta Perry
Averil Brown	12/7/1980	6/15/2004	son	of Carolyn Brown
Jason Gibson	1/10/1971	6/18/1997	son	of Tricia Garrett
Jennifer Lea Evans	5/6/1974	6/19/1995	daughter	of Delores Evans
Joel Robert Grey	2/28/1967	6/19/2004	son	of Diane Grey
Rebecca Steinbach	6/30/1987	6/19/2002	daughter	of Dawn Steinbach
Evan Walker	10/12/2002	6/22/2004	son	of Kim and Eric Walker
Aaron Woodruff	6/30/1975	6/22/2002	brother	of Rachel Woodruff
Evan Sheffield	6/12/1981	6/23/2004	son	of Cathy Spraez
Dominic Alan Nwoye	9/13/1996	6/25/2002	son	of Juanita Bell
Steven Curtis	1/22/1974	6/26/1990	son	of Janet Curtis
Melvin Shannon	2/23/1956	6/30/2000	son	of Lillian Smith
Melvin Shannon	2/23/1956	6/30/2000	brother	of Juanita White

Give Teens a Chance – Understanding Teen Grief

By Ben Sieff, HSSA

I had just turned 16 when my older brother, Tim, was murdered. I was already struggling with the pressures of being a teen. I certainly did not need my life to be any more complicated. It was the most difficult thing I had ever experienced. Eventually, I emerged from my loss with a better understanding of grief. Since then, I have always felt the need to advocate for grieving teens.

Being a parent to a grieving teen can be tough. When I've listened to parents talk about their teen, I've heard them say things like: "My teen doesn't want to talk to me about their loss. They seem so distant. I want to help, but I don't know how. I just want to share a good cry with them."

Being a grieving teen can be tough. Some of the things I've heard teens say are "I don't talk to my parents about my loss because I don't want to upset them. I am really going through a difficult time right now. I feel a tremendous weight upon my shoulders. I don't think my parents understand."

Allow a teen to be a teen. Not only has their loss been difficult for them to get through, but they are also getting bombarded with all kinds of other stress. Never allow yourself to compare your surviving teen with the one who died. In my house, we had a bookshelf dedicated to the "greatness" of my brother. One of the things that really angered me was that his memory was being distorted. He was a great brother, but he was no angel. I wanted to

remember him for exactly who he was – good and bad included.

One of the most important things that a grieving teen can have is a friend they can talk to. As a parent, this may be you, but more often it is not. There are several reasons for this. The teen may feel that bringing up the subject will only make the parent feel worse. I call this "parenting the parent."

Another reason is that as grievors, we all tend to be very selfish. Often the parent feels that they are entitled to the most grief. Grief should not be competitive. Everyone handles his or her grief differently.

No one said this was going to be easy. Give yourself some room to grieve as well as your teen. I have found that when you give a teen a chance to express his or her grief, then they will do the same for you.

Ben lost his older brother to homicide when he was 16. He has a bachelor's degree in Human Social Service Administration and is a co-director of Center Corporation, a non-profit grief resource center. He was the sibling chair for The Compassionate Friends National Conference in Atlanta in 2003.

The Compassionate Friends offers a Sibling Chat Room on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. (Eastern Time) and also from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. (Eastern Time) on Sunday evenings. Visit www.compassionatefriends.org and click on Sibling Resources on the left side of the web page.



®Sibling Credo

We are the surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

We are brought together by the deaths of our brothers and sisters. Open your hearts to us, but have patience with us. Sometimes we will need the support of our friends. At other times we need our families to be there. Sometimes we must walk alone, taking our memories with us, continuing to become the individuals we want to be. We cannot be our dead brother or sister; however, a special part of them lives on with us. When our brothers and sisters died, our lives changed. We are living a life very different from what we envisioned, and we feel the responsibility to be strong even when we feel weak. Yet we can go on because we understand better than many others the value of family and the precious gift of life.

Our goal is not to be the forgotten mourners that we sometimes are, but to walk together to face our tomorrows as surviving siblings of The Compassionate Friends.

Chad's Song

(You Are Wonderful Tonight)

Jayne Newton of The Atlanta Chapter of TCF shared the following very special poem written in her son Chad's memory by Wanda Bryant:

He sits down calmly on the side of her bed,
Is he real or just memories inside of her head.
His smile begins with an impish grin,
Bringing back memories of a time back then.

In a voice so masculine, angelic and pure,
He speaks of his love for his mother for sure.
As he leans forward to place a kiss upon her slumbering brow,
He tells her he loves her forever but must leave her for now.

As she stirs in deep sleep filled with dreams of her son,
The beating of her heart fills with the warmth of morning sun.
As she awakens still with the feel of his kiss,
Another wonderful dream she wouldn't have missed

Her eyes wander over to the corner where it still stands,
The musical instrument once held in her child's hands.
And in her mind she hears his music of charm,
And throughout the day she's protected from harm.

Yet she knows that her son's sweet melody still touches the hearts of others,
With the hauntingly beauty of this music that touches many sisters and brothers.
With guitar resting upon his bended knee,
Still his soul shines through in the music as it's played for you and me.

So close your eyes and listen with your heart and soul,
To the tunes of Chad's song, let your heart be consoled.
And you too will be able to see the man Chad was,
And you can feel Chad's spirit as he plays for us all.

*By Wanda Bryant
In Memory of Chad
5/21/72 - 9/3/96*



News Briefs

Susan and John Carithers of the Atlanta Chapter of TCF will represent TCF at a booth during the upcoming "Grief, Grieving and Grief Support Training Conference," scheduled for April 27 at Clayton State University in Morrow, Ga. The conference is sponsored by the Georgia SIDS Project, SHARE Atlanta, TCF, The National Center for Primary Care at Morehouse School of Medicine and others.

The cost for the full day is \$30. There also are special workshops designed for bereaved families during the afternoon sessions for a cost of just \$5.

The full conference runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is followed by a memorial program honoring children who are no longer with us on earth, but are in our hearts and memories.

If you can attend the conference and help Susan and John with the TCF booth, please call 770-474-6243 or email wescar20@yahoo.com.

For details about the conference and memorial program, go to www.sidsga.org or call 678-342-3360.



The week of April 23-30 is National Crime Victims Rights Week. To launch the week, the Crime Victims Advocacy Council will conduct a memorial service on Sunday, April 23, at 3 p.m. at Northside United Methodist Church, 2799 Northside Drive, Atlanta, Ga. The service honors the names of more than 3,000 Atlanta homicide victims on 15 large memorial walls.

Everyone who would like to attend can light candles for families whose loved one was murdered and for family members who are grieving the loss of a serviceman/officer killed in the War Against Terror, or the loss of a law enforcement or criminal justice official.

CVAC also offers free counseling and support groups for family members whose loved one was murdered, was the victim of a DUI fatality or attempted murder. Meetings are on Tuesdays from 7:30-9 p.m. Call 770-333-9254 for details and/or directions. Or, email askcvac@aol.com.



Sixty-five employers, representing 28 states plus Puerto Rico, are being recognized by the Board of Directors of The Compassionate Friends for showing extra sensitivity to bereaved employees following the death of a child.

Generally nominated by the persons they have directly helped, these employers are receiving Compassionate Employer Recognition in 2006 for going above and beyond the normal policies of most companies in helping their employees when the death of a child occurred.

In Georgia, recipients include: DeKalb County School System, Decatur; Portman's Music Superstore, Savannah; and Repco Sales of Georgia, Woodstock.

Special Birthday Table

Our Chapter has a monthly Birthday Table. This is a special table set up for those who have a child, grandchild or sibling's birthday in that month. Please bring a photo/memento and share a special memory of your child. You are also welcome to bring your child's favorite food or birthday cake to share with the group. We hope you will take this opportunity to share your child with us.

For more information, please call Tamie Dodge, our birthday table coordinator, at 770-982-2251 or Dodgecat2001@yahoo.com

Birthday and Angel Date Cards

Cards are created by

Carol Hawley

In Memory of her son, Billy Hawley

3/15/83 – 9/27/04

Norcross, GA

Special thanks are extended to Jerry McDonald and Plaid Enterprises, Inc., Norcross, Ga., for donating materials for the cards.

Gifts of Love

A love gift is a gift of money to The Compassionate Friends of Atlanta. It is usually in honor of a child who has died, but it can also be from individuals who want to honor a relative or friend who has died, a gift of thanksgiving that their own children are alive and well, or simply a gift from someone who wants to help in the work of our chapters. The following donations are in support of the Atlanta Chapter newsletter, candlelight service, web site and other outreach.

All chapters within TCF are totally dependent on funds from our families. We DO NOT receive funds from our National Office. Everything we need to operate our local chapters are paid directly from our local resources and our local family contributions. Thank you to all who contribute and support your local chapters. Some people contribute in Memory of Other Children.....this is a wonderful way for others to say "I am Remembering your child." Other "Gifts of Love" are evident by all the compassionate and giving volunteers we have within our TCF Atlanta organization.



Love gifts to the Atlanta Chapter of TCF should be made payable to The Compassionate Friends and mailed to our treasurer: Jayne Newton, 808 Brentway Court, Lilburn, GA 30047

In Loving Memory of Jennifer Lea Evans, from her mother Delores Evans, Lawrenceville, GA
In Loving Memory of Matthew L. Davis, from his mother Lena L. Price, Norcross, GA
In Loving Memory of Christopher Simpson, from his grandmother, Elizabeth Luke, Auburn, GA
In Loving Memory of Stephanie Weber, from her father, John Weber, Roswell, GA

In Loving Memory of Rachel Trotti, from her parents Joy-Lyn and James Trotti, Decatur, GA
In Loving Memory of Joey Capron, from his mother, Carmen J. Capron, Chamblee, GA
In Loving Memory of Annie Hope Shlevin, from her parents Dr. Harold and Barbara Shlevin, Atlanta, GA
In Loving Memory of Dianne Martha Shlevin, from her parents Dr. Harold and Barbara Shlevin, Atlanta, GA

In Loving Memory of Megan Murphy, from Doris and Glenn Crowell, Lilburn, GA
In Loving Memory of Matthew Thomas (Matt) Crowell, from his parents Doris and Glenn Crowell, Lilburn, GA
In Loving Memory of Tommy McDonald, from Jerry McDonald and Plaid Enterprises, Inc., Norcross, GA

NEW SUBSCRIPTION - RENEWAL - CHANGE FORM - DONATIONS

If you are receiving our newsletter for the first time...everyone within The Compassionate Friends Organization wants to say We are sorry you have the need for this publication but we are glad you found us and we hope our newsletter will be helpful on your journey. Someone may have lovingly sent you the newsletter...and if so and you find it helpful, please complete the data sheet enclosed and return it so that we may add you to our newsletter database for future mailings. This is to insure that all the information we have is correct and complete. *This is for internal use only.*

Please print, filling in all applicable blanks/boxes:

Your Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____

Phone (including area code) _____ Email: _____

Do you prefer to receive the newsletter by (check one): _____ Mail _____ Email (provide email address above)

Child's Full Name: _____ Male _____ Female _____

Child's Birth Date: _____ Child's Death Date: _____

Cause of Child's Death (optional): _____

Child's relationship to you (e.g. son, daughter, brother, sister, grandchild) _____

Names and ages of all surviving siblings living with you:

- How did you find out about The Compassionate Friends? Please circle one: (1) Friends (2) Family (3) Hospital (4) Church (5) School (6) Funeral Homes (7) Internet (8) Newspaper (9) Employers (Human Resources) (10) Other _____

Note: **The information you have given above will be confidential (used for internal purposes only) unless you answer "yes" to one or more of the following questions:**

1. Do you want your child's name to appear in the newsletter's "**We Remember You**" section of birth and death dates? Yes___ No___
2. Do you want to receive the daily e-newsletter from TCF Atlanta? If so, please include your email _____
2. Do you wish to have your child's name included on the Wall of Memory on our TCF Atlanta Web Site? Yes___ No ___
3. May we include the above information in the TCF Atlanta Chapter directory? Yes _____ No _____

Voluntary donations are TCF Atlanta's only source of income. The Compassionate Friends needs to be here for the families who do not know today that they will need us tomorrow.

Yes, I want to help with TCF outreach...a donation is enclosed in Memory of _____

I would like to apply my donation toward the following outreach: (1) _____ newsletter (2) _____ birthday/angel date cards
(3) _____ newly-bereaved packets (4) _____ annual candlelight remembrance service (5) _____ library (6) _____ general expenses

Make Checks Payable to: The Compassionate Friends

Please return to: The Compassionate Friends, c/o Jayne Newton (treasurer), 808 Brentway Court, Lilburn, GA 30047

Or Make Donations Online by Pay Pal

<http://www.tcfatlanta.org/donationdataform.html>



®Our Credo...

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

We reach out to each other with love, with understanding and with hope.
Our children have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for our children unites us.

Your pain becomes my pain just as your hope becomes my hope.

We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances.

We are a unique family because we represent many races and creeds. We are young, and we are old.

Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh
and so intensely painful that we feel helpless and see no hope.

Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength; some of us are struggling to find answers.

Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression; others radiate an inner peace.

But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends,
it is pain we will share just as we share with each other our love for our children.

We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves,
but we are committed to building that future together as we reach out to each other in love and
share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace,
share the faith as well as the doubts and help each other to grieve as well as to grow.

We need not walk alone. We Are The Compassionate Friends



The Compassionate Friends Atlanta Chapter
1364 Sanden Ferry Drive
Decatur, GA 30033

Honoring 26 Years of Support and Friendship for
Bereaved Families

Spring 2006 Newsletter